India, food security is an important and integral element of national security and has demanded the creation of a "Food Security Box" so as to take care of its food security and livelihood concerns and has *interalia* sought sufficient flexibility for domestic policy measures taken by the developing country members for allevation of poverty, rural development, rural employment and diversification of agriculture. However, the items such as housing, education, water etc. are outside the purview of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and, therefore, these issues have not been covered in the Indian proposals for the ongoing negotiations under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

Protection to Domestic Agricultural Products

581. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether some agreements have been signed with WTO by the Central Government during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such agreements have affected marketing of domestic agricultural products of the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps to be taken to ensure protection to domestic agricultural products?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Government of India have not signed any agreement with WTO during the last two years.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

White Paper on WTO

582. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring out a White Paper on WTO and agriculture, detailing the expectations, the experience and the stand it plan to take in renegotiating the agreement; and

(b) what steps Government would take to deal with threats that are inherent in the WTO Agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The Government have already announced its National Agricultural Policy and have also put on the website of the Department of Commerce a broad position paper on the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and the Indian proposals as submitted by India in the WTO for the ongoing mandated negotiations under the Agreement on Agriculture.

(b) The WTO agreements have provided a predictable rule based multilateral trading system which protects developing countries from the bilateral pressures of the developed country partners. By virtue of signing of WTO agreement, India is automatically entitled to get the most favoured nation (MFN) and national treatment from all WTO members for its exports. Being a fully democratic organisation, with equal voting rights to each member, India is assured of a say in the multilateral rule making process. Under the ongoing mandated negotiations on the Agreement on Agriculture, India in its proposals submitted to WTO, has sought flexibility in the implementation of its domestic policies so as to take care of its food security, livelihood, rural development and poverty alleviation concerns. India in its proposals, has also demanded substantial reduction in domestic support, elimination of export subsidies, substantial reductions in tariffs including elimination of tariff peaks and tariff escalation so as to get meaningful market access for its agricultural products in the developed country markets. In the wake of removal of QRs as were maintained on Balance of Payment grounds, Government have also put in place a suitable mechanism for monitoring the import of sensitive items and are committed to provide adequate protection to the domestic producers by resorting to various WTO compatible measures which include appropriate calibration of applied tariffs within the bound tariffs, anti-dumping and safeguard action and imposition of countervailing duties under certain specified circumstances.